

## ***Dakota STEP-A Administration***

The *Dakota STEP Alternate Assessment (Dakota STEP-A)* is the statewide assessment created to ensure the state's compliance with the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA)*, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, and Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*. The *Dakota STEP-A* assessment is aligned with the South Dakota Alternate Content Standards and is designed to measure the skills of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are enrolled in Special Education programs

<b>Critical Dates for the Spring 2007 <i>Dakota STEP-A</i> Administration</b>	
<b>January 8–11, 2007</b>	Pretest workshops
<b>January 16–19, 2007</b>	Scheduled delivery of <i>Dakota STEP-A</i> assessment materials
<b>January 22, 2007</b>	Material shortages and requests for additional assessment materials must be reported to the Harcourt Customer Support Center at 1-800-763-2306.  <i>Requests received after this date may not arrive in time for the administration and will be shipped at the district's expense.</i>
<b>Feb. 5–Mar. 16, 2007</b>	<b><i>Dakota STEP-A Administration</i></b>
<b>March 21, 2007</b>	LAST DAY for scorable documents to be picked up by UPS
<b>March 23, 2007</b>	LAST DAY for scorable documents to be delivered to Harcourt Assessment's Scoring Center
<b>August 2007</b>	Districts receive <i>Dakota STEP-A</i> results

Questions regarding the administration of the *Dakota STEP-A* (alternate assessment) should be directed to

**Linda Turner at 1-605-773-6119 or  
linda.turner@state.sd.us.**

## Activities Before Administration

### New for Spring 2007

The following changes have been implemented for the *Dakota STEP-A* spring 2007 administration:

- ☐ Science assessments have been added to the *Dakota STEP-A* at grades 5, 8, and 11 only.
- ☐ The *Dakota STEP-A* is required to be administered to students with significant cognitive disabilities at grades 3 through 8 and 11 (“on grade”). If a district conducts districtwide assessment, the *Dakota STEP-A* is available for the assessment of students with disabilities in kindergarten, grades 1 and 2, and grades 9 and 10 (“off grade”). It is not required for districts that do not conduct districtwide assessment or that choose another acceptable alternate assessment.
- ☐ Supporting Evidence will not receive a separate score but will be used to validate the rating given on the rating scale.
- ☐ A Rater Resolution Worksheet is to be completed by the Special Education teacher (Rater 1) and Rater 2 to reach consensus on ratings for tasks/skills with Supporting Evidence that differ.

District/building test coordinators should thoroughly review the *Dakota STEP-A Directions for Administering* for complete details of these changes as well as test administration guidelines.

### Training for Special Education Teachers/Test Administrators

Training for the *Dakota STEP-A* test administration will be provided by the South Dakota Department of Education and Harcourt Assessment during the week of January 8 through 11, 2007. Training materials will be available for review on the SD DOE website following these sessions. Special Education teachers and colleagues are required to acknowledge whether they received training for the *Dakota STEP-A* test administration.

### Test Coordinator Responsibilities

As test coordinator, your primary responsibility is to act as a liaison between the Special Education teachers (test administrators) and Harcourt Assessment. Your major responsibilities include:

- ☐ Verifying the shipment of materials to determine that there are sufficient materials for Special Education teachers and colleagues.
- ☐ Ensuring that all Special Education teachers/colleagues attend training workshops or review training materials provided.
- ☐ Distributing test materials to Special Education teachers and verifying that an accurate accounting of materials is maintained.
- ☐ Informing Special Education teachers/colleagues of test security measures and ensuring that test security is maintained throughout the assessment.
- ☐ Working with Special Education teachers to administer the *Dakota STEP-A* assessment **within the statewide administration period of February 5–March 16, 2007**. Your schedule must allow time for the assembly and shipment of all scorable materials to arrive at Harcourt Assessment **NO LATER THAN March 23, 2007**.
- ☐ Inspecting the packaging of assessment materials returned by the Special Education teachers.
- ☐ Packaging and shipping all assessment materials to Harcourt Assessment on or before March 21, 2007.

If there is more than one school in your district, you may wish to appoint a building test coordinator or the Special Education teacher to carry out some of these responsibilities. You should also keep the principal of each school informed about all testing activities.

### Determine Students to be Assessed

On December 9, 2003, revised regulations providing new flexibility for calculation of adequate yearly progress under *No Child Left Behind* were published. These regulations allow for the states to determine the definition of “students with significant cognitive disabilities.” Caution is given to IEP teams to absolutely avoid overrepresentation of those termed “significantly cognitively disabled.”

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who receive scores of “Applying” or “Advancing” based on alternate academic content standards may be included in AYP calculations but may not exceed 1% of all the students assessed.

#### South Dakota Significant Cognitive Disability Eligibility Criteria

1. The student has an active IEP with annual goals and short-term objectives/benchmarks which focus on the alternate content standards; and
2. the student’s cognitive abilities are 2.0 standard deviations or more below the mean (inclusive of the standard error of measurement); and
3. the student primarily requires direct and extensive instruction to acquire, maintain, generalize, and transfer skills done in naturally occurring settings of the student’s life (e.g. school, community, home, vocational/career, and recreation and leisure).

Decisions about whether a student participates in the *Dakota STEP* assessment under standardized testing conditions or participates with standard accommodations must be made on an individual basis by the student’s IEP or Section 504 team. If it is determined that a student with a disability cannot participate in the *Dakota STEP* assessment with standard accommodations, the student must be assessed utilizing the *Dakota STEP-A* (alternate assessment). Documentation of meeting the criteria for significant cognitive disability must be maintained in the student’s file, and the use of the alternate assessment (*Dakota STEP-A*) must be written into the IEP after such determination by the IEP team.

### Receive and Inventory Assessment Materials

Verify the contents of the *Dakota STEP-A* assessment materials shipment against the quantities indicated on the packing slip, and determine if there are sufficient assessment materials for Special Education teachers and their colleagues.

If there is a discrepancy between the packing list and the quantities received or if additional assessment materials are needed, contact the **Harcourt Customer Support Center** at **1-800-763-2306** or **customersupportcenter@harcourt.com**.

Organize the assessment materials by Special Education teacher to facilitate distribution prior to administration. Retain the shipping cartons for use when returning materials to Harcourt Assessment.

**Assessment Materials Provided - Packaged by Student**

- ☐ *Dakota STEP-A Directions for Administering* (for all grade levels)
- ☐ Grade-specific *Dakota STEP-A Rating Forms* (two per student)
- ☐ *Dakota STEP-A Data Collection Form\** (for submission of Supporting Evidence)
- ☐ *Dakota STEP-A Score Resolution Worksheet\**
- ☐ Envelopes for returning each student's assessment materials
- ☐ *Test Coordinator's Kit*, including:
  - *Master File Sheets*
  - UPS shipping labels
  - HOT PINK peel-and-stick return labels for SCORABLE materials
  - GREEN peel-and-stick return labels for NON-SCORABLE materials

(\* These forms may be copied if necessary.)

**Ensure the Security of Assessment Materials**

It is important to follow all security measures before, during, and after the administration to ensure the integrity and validity of the assessment. All assessment materials must be kept in a secure location except when being utilized by Special Education teachers and colleagues.

Test security agreements and affidavits must be completed prior to the *Dakota STEP-A* administration. By signing these documents, you are agreeing to exercise necessary precautions and to follow established procedures that will ensure the security of the content of all assessment materials.

Before the administration of the *Dakota STEP-A* assessment,

1. **Fill in the title of the *Dakota STEP-A* assessment on the *Test Security Agreement* and the *Test Security Affidavit*.**
2. **Review and sign the *Test Security Agreement* for test coordinators.**
3. **Copy and disseminate the *Test Security Affidavit* to all teachers/examiners, and collect the signed documents prior to distributing assessment materials.**
4. **Send the original *Test Security Agreement* and *Test Security Affidavits* to:**  
Gay Pickner  
c/o South Dakota Department of Education  
700 Governors Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501
5. **Retain a copy of the *Test Security Agreement* and each *Test Security Affidavit* for your records.**

**Provide Training for Special Education Teachers**

It is your responsibility to ensure that Special Education teachers/colleagues receive training to ensure the successful administration of the *Dakota STEP-A* assessment. This training should include information provided by the South Dakota Department of Education and Harcourt Assessment, this section of the *Test Coordinator's Handbook*, and the *Dakota STEP-A Directions for Administering*. Carefully review the *Dakota STEP-A Directions for Administering* as well as the Rating Forms and Data Collection Form prior to your training session(s).

The following topics should be reviewed during your training sessions:

- responsibilities of Special Education teachers
- test security, including the Teacher/Examiner's Test Security Affidavit
- assessment schedule
- completing the demographic data page
- completing the student characteristics survey within the Rating Form
- preparing and returning assessment materials

Special Education teachers are responsible for:

- Identifying tasks/skills from the Rating Form for which Supporting Evidence will be collected and documented on the Data Collection Forms.
- Collecting student work samples.
- Completing the entire Rating Form following the collection of student work samples.
- Providing Rater 2 with the Data Collection Forms and Supporting Evidence collected as well as a Rating Form for completion.
- Collecting the second Rating Form from Rater 2.
- Reconciling ratings which differ for tasks with Supporting Evidence using the Score Resolution Worksheet.
- Assembling and returning all materials to the test coordinator.

### **Distribute Assessment Materials to Special Education Teachers**

Test coordinators are to maintain an accurate record of assessment materials distributed to each Special Education teacher. Emphasize the importance of maintaining test security as well as following the instructions provided in this *Test Coordinator's Handbook* and the *Dakota STEP-A Directions for Administering*.

To ensure accurate and reliable results, Special Education teachers and colleagues should thoroughly review the *Dakota STEP-A Directions for Administering* and the assessment materials before beginning the assessment. The *Dakota STEP-A Directions for Administering* provide Special Education teachers with specific instructions for completing and submitting Rating Forms and Supporting Evidence.

Distribute the Data Collection Forms, Score Resolution Worksheets, and envelopes to Special Education teachers and/or building coordinators for use in organizing and returning completed assessment materials.

## **Activities During Administration**

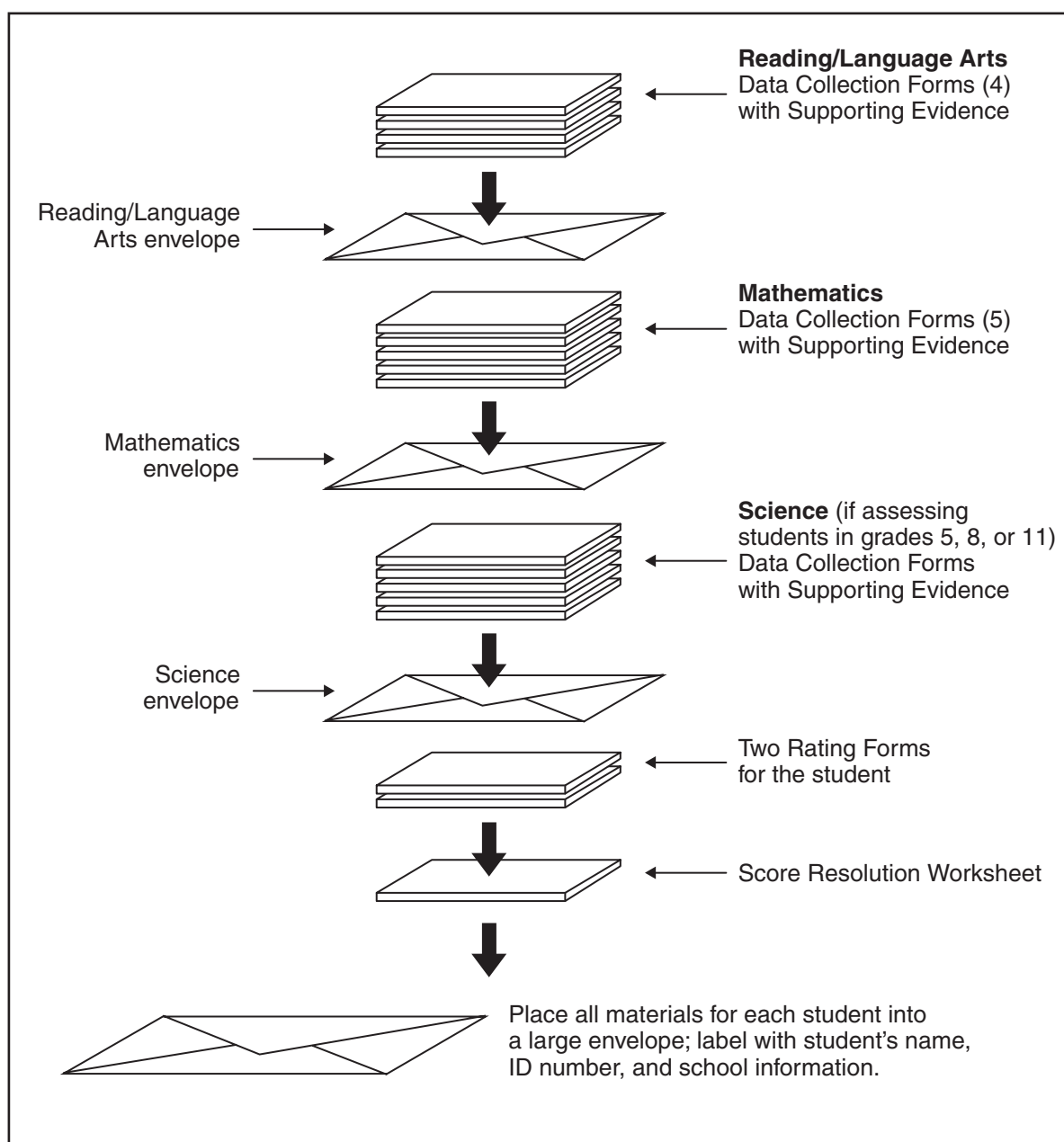
Monitor the assessments conducted in your school(s). Ensure that the guidelines and procedures described in this *Test Coordinator's Handbook* and the *Dakota STEP-A Directions for Administering* are adhered to, and be available to answer questions and resolve problems. Utilize the *Test Irregularity Form* found in Appendix A to document and resolve any test security issues with the South Dakota Department of Education.

## Activities After Administration

Collect all assessment materials from Special Education teachers and/or building coordinators. Verify that the scorable materials are packaged and labeled by school.

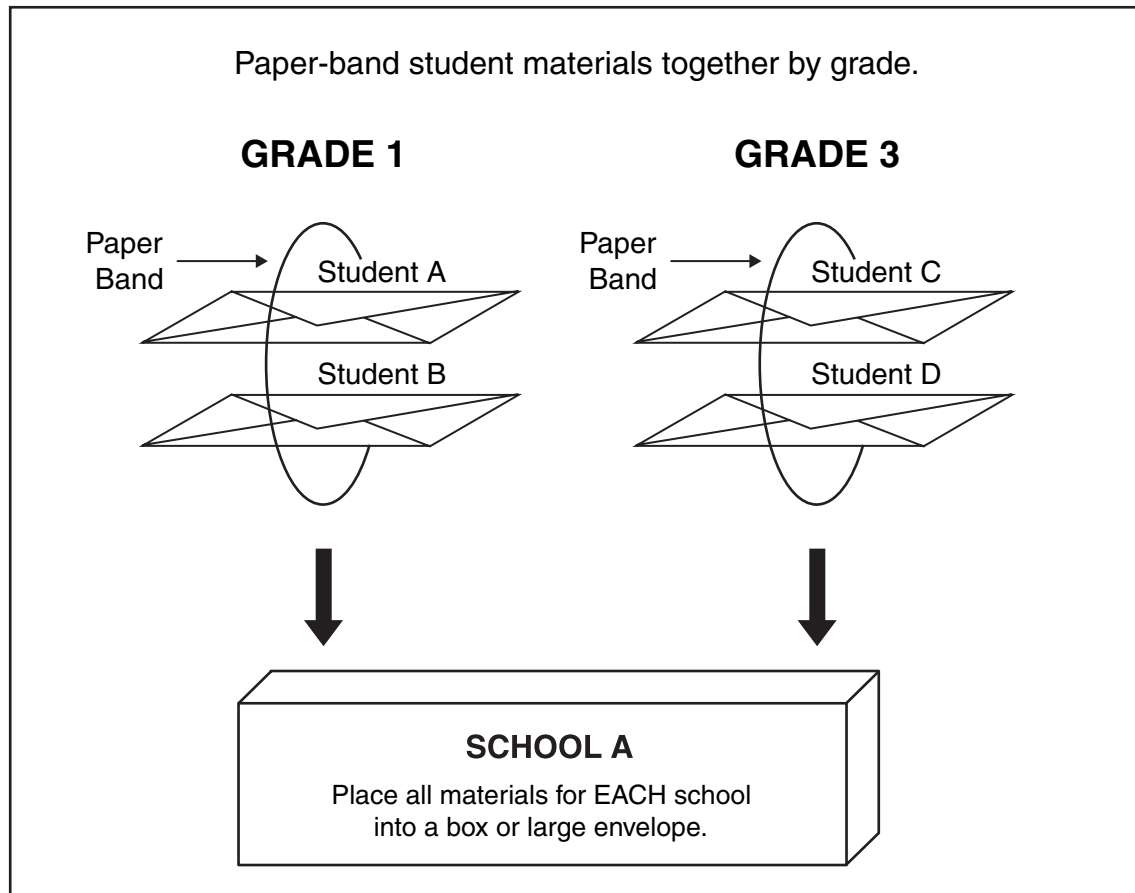
**Student Materials:** Special Education teachers are responsible for packaging the assessment materials for each student. Supporting Evidence (student work samples) must be accompanied by Data Collection Forms and packaged in content-specific envelopes. Rating Forms (2 per student), the Score Resolution Worksheet, and the content-specific envelopes for each student are then packaged together in the large envelope (or box) as shown.

### Packing Diagram for *Dakota STEP-A* Student Materials



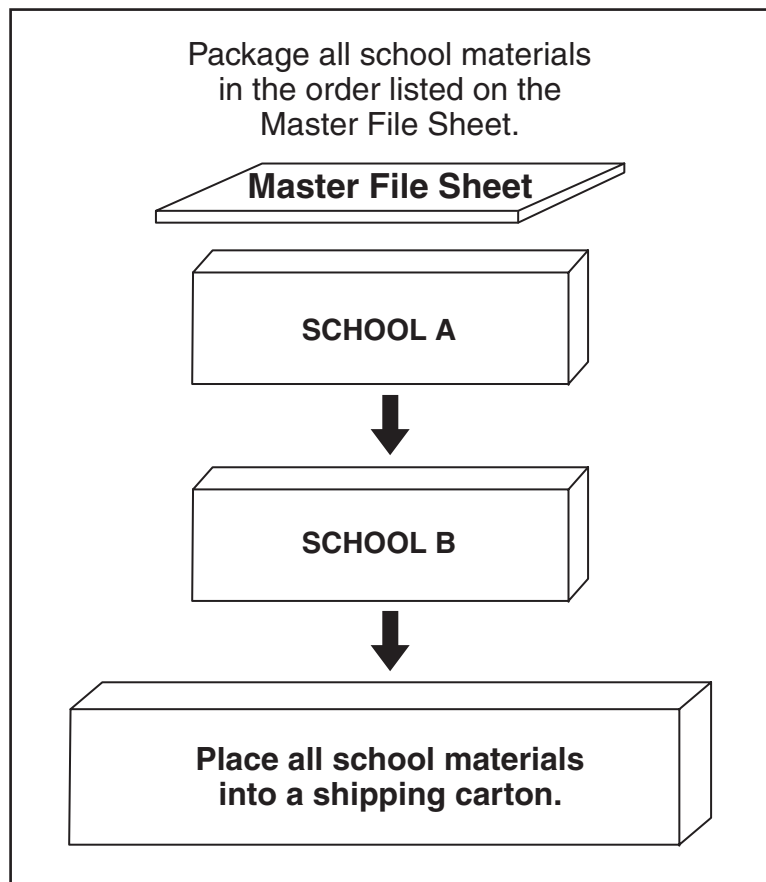
**School Materials:** Special Education teachers or building coordinators are to group student materials by grade for each building.

### Packing Diagram for *Dakota STEP-A* School Materials



**District Materials:** Test coordinators are to organize and package all *Dakota STEP-A* scorable materials by school and grade and complete the Master File Sheet.

### Packing Diagram for *Dakota STEP-A* District Materials



#### Complete the Master File Sheet (MFS)

The envelopes/boxes containing students' *Dakota STEP-A* assessment materials should be grouped by grade and by school in the order in which they are listed on the Master File Sheet. You may find it easier to start with the last school listed on the Master File Sheet and work backwards. The Master File Sheet should be placed at the top of Box 1 of your shipment. An example of a completed Master File Sheet is provided on the following page.

Examine the Master File Sheet to verify that all building names are preprinted. It is important to use the correct sheet. Do not change the preprinted name of the buildings on the Master File Sheet. If you feel a change is necessary, contact the Harcourt Customer Support Center at 1-800-763-2306 or [customersupportcenter@harcourt.com](mailto:customersupportcenter@harcourt.com).

**Write in the grade(s) submitted for each building and enter "1" under the "Number of Groups" column on the Master File Sheet.** Next, enter the total number of student materials for each grade under the "Number of Documents" column on the Master File Sheet.

Retain a copy of the completed Master File Sheet for your records.



## Example of a *Dakota STEP-A* Master File Sheet

### Master File Sheet

Page 1

District: HAPPY HOUSE  
 Code: 26001  
 Contact: John Doe  
 Address: 123 MAIN

ABERDEEN  
 Telephone: (605) 555-1212

SD 12345

Building Number	Building Name	Grade	Number of Groups	Number of Documents
2600189	FUN ELEM	1	1	1
		3	1	2
2600110	FUN HIGH			
2600111	FUN MID			

TOTALS:      2      3

For Scoring Center Use	Receiving Number	Order Number	Date Received
	Testing Program	Est N-Count	

## Organize and Pack *Dakota STEP-A* Assessment Materials

### SCORABLE *Dakota STEP-A* Assessment Materials

Test coordinators must return ALL *Dakota STEP-A* scorable materials as soon as possible after testing is complete **so that the materials arrive at Harcourt Assessment NO LATER THAN March 23, 2007.**

**SCORABLE** assessment materials should be returned to Harcourt Assessment with the **UPS “2nd Day Air”** and **HOT PINK “South Dakota Alternate Assessment Materials”** return label(s) affixed to each box. Complete all information on the **HOT PINK** label. If more than one box is needed, label the boxes serially. For example, a shipment of four boxes would be labeled “Box 1 of 4,” “Box 2 of 4,” “Box 3 of 4,” and “Box 4 of 4.”

When packing the envelopes containing scorable assessment materials for return to Harcourt Assessment, use boxes in which the envelopes will not shift, such as the dual-purpose cartons in which you received your assessment materials. The dual-purpose cartons in which your materials were shipped were designed to be used for both shipping materials to districts and returning materials to Harcourt Assessment. To use these cartons for returning your assessment materials—

1. fold down the flaps that were used to ship materials to you from Harcourt Assessment, then
2. fold down the flaps labeled “Affix Shipping Return Label Here,” and then
3. tape the carton across the words “Tape Here.”

All empty space should be filled with crumpled paper.

Scorable assessment materials must be sent as a **SINGLE SHIPMENT** to the Harcourt Scoring Center. Do NOT ship SCORABLE materials in with your shipment of NON-SCORABLE materials.

### NON-SCORABLE *Dakota STEP-A* Assessment Materials

The following NON-SCORABLE test materials should be boxed and returned to Harcourt Assessment using **UPS “GroundTrak”** and **GREEN “non-scorable”** labels.

- ☐ *Dakota STEP-A* *Directions for Administering*
- ☐ *Dakota STEP-A* unused Rating Forms

Unused Data Collection Forms and Score Resolution Worksheets may be returned to Harcourt Assessment or destroyed at the district/school level.

Affix the **“GroundTrak”** UPS label(s) and the **GREEN** return label(s) to the box(es) of **NON-SCORABLE** materials. Complete all information on the GREEN label. If more than one box is needed, label the boxes serially. For example, a shipment of four boxes would be labeled “Box 1 of 4,” “Box 2 of 4,” “Box 3 of 4,” and “Box 4 of 4.”

**Ship Assessment Materials to Harcourt Assessment**

Test coordinators are responsible for the return of ALL *Dakota STEP-A* assessment materials via UPS to:

Harcourt Assessment  
c/o AccuData Services, Inc.  
17317 Bell North Drive  
Schertz, TX 78154  
Attn: Joan Patteson, Project Manager

Pre-paid UPS labels are provided in your *Test Coordinator's Kit*. The labels are preprinted with the Scoring Center's delivery address and your district's information. Should you require additional return labels, please contact the Harcourt Customer Support Center at 1-800-763-2306 or customersupportcenter@harcourt.com.

**Please do not use labels from the *Dakota STEP* or *Dakota ELP* assessments. Materials from these assessments are sent to other locations.**

Contact UPS toll-free to arrange for pickup: 1-800-214-0391.
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Contact UPS at least one day in advance to arrange for the collection of your scorable and non-scorable materials. Early shipment is encouraged. Shipments must be ready for collection on the day UPS specifies retrieval. Return trips by UPS to your school district will delay the return of your scorable materials to the Harcourt Assessment Scoring Center and result in scoring delays. (Test coordinators may ship non-scorable test materials at the same time as scorable materials or at a later date.)

Thank you for your time and effort ensuring the successful administration of the <i>Dakota STEP-A</i> assessment.
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